

PVRC Newsletter March 2020

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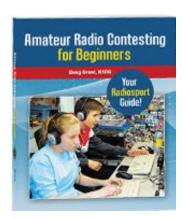
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President's Letter - Tom K3AJ

Trivia question – when is the last time the President's Letter was a book review? No, I don't know either. This month I am pleased to review a terrific new book.

Amateur Radio Contesting for Beginners Doug Grant, K1DG



This is a brand-new title from the ARRL. I was very excited to see it, as any tool to help us encourage, mentor and develop new contesters supports one of the most important things we can do as individuals and as a club.

Doug's resume and accomplishments as a contester are without question, and he matches that background with great skill as a writer. His style is easy to absorb and engaging. The text is massively supported with pictures and graphics.

The topics covered are thorough indeed and hit all the right areas. Everything the beginner wanted to know but was afraid to ask is in here. Topics like understanding contest exchanges and multipliers, how a typical contest QSO progresses, running vs. pouncing, what the typical categories of entry are, logging software and how to submit a log are examples of the real basics. But there is also a lot of information on contesting strategies, station set up, ergonomics and similar contesting topics that even intermediate contesters could benefit from. Equipment selection, performance and

station building are covered well with useful knowledge for both beginners and many of us already past the rank beginner stage. Some more advanced topics like receiver performance for contesting, log analysis, cost/benefit calculations of antenna improvements and even terrain analysis might be beyond the beginner's immediate needs but are introduced in a way that gives some notion of how much there is to learn as the new contester's skills and station develop.

Doug makes sure that all aspects of contesting are discussed. There are specific chapters covering VHF/UHF contesting and digital contesting, for example. All the major contests and contest types are discussed from the big DX contests through the state QSO parties. Doug does an amazing job of sprinkling the text and appendices with info and links to many helpful contesting tools and resources including things like contest calendars, 3830scores.com, the on-line scoreboards and, of course, the all-important information on contest clubs!

All of this is accomplished in 240 pages of text and appendices. Being able to cover a lot of information in relatively few words is a rare skill. Doug is to be commended for exemplifying that.

Consider <u>obtaining a copy</u> and circulating it among the newer contesters you may know. (Wait until your birthday month and use your ARRL \$10 Happy Bday coupon – pays the shipping and saves you another \$2.50 – K3TN)

73 and Go PVRC!



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FrostFest Selfies



From Bob K4NTO: Booth babes Tim N3QE and Mike N4GU, joined by Tom K3AJ at the PVRC table.



From Dan K2YWE: The Galactic Lunch crowd

Contesting 1929 Style – Or Just Having Radio Fun - Bruce WK3A



1929 #27 Parallel Triode Tubes

I built this little gem a few weeks ago. I had just retired in October and it was one of those things I had thought about for a long time, but never actually got to it. After taking the transmitter to the January PVRC Meeting in Annapolis this week, a lot of curiosity and questions came up – the big one was "why do something like this"? Another was "where is the crystal?" My guess is that Frank W3LPL had posted something on the reflector a year ago about this "Bruce Kelly Memorial Contest" and to listen for strange signals. I jumped right in on it but unfortunately modern rigs can't compete but do help with the other ops scoring.

Since was a kid I've always been fascinated since I was about tubes and the like, so I promised myself to get something going. I remember Dad and I taking **all** the tubes out of the TV and going to the drug store and putting them in that huge strange looking tube tester device. Sometimes successful, sometimes not finding a problem. Then voila, the kid opens the cabinet and a brand new 6JE6 for \$5.95 appears.

Over the years I had collected pieces and parts like everyone else, someday to homebrew something. Gee, why wait until you were 65, Bruce? So, away we went digging through the junk box, scavenging eBay, digging in the National Electronics Museum junk, and finally some good pieces from Dan K2YWE. Oh yeah, unfortunately the power supply was to be modern. Mouser Electronics did their part, too - and yeah, the local ACE hardware was visited a bunch of times. There is 10 feet of ½" ice maker copper tubing in that 80M tank coil.

I missed the real contest for this rig, the Bruce Kelly in November, but I did make it by two slim days ahead for the Linc Cundall Memorial contest. The Kelly is for pre-1929 rigs and the Cundall is for 1950 and earlier, so guys with the WWII surplus stuff can compete. The transmitter had not been connected to the antenna yet, but I had tweaked it quite a bit on a dummy load to get it sounding right, and some sort of power out of it - a huge 2.6 watts. The power oscillators are not terribly efficient so 30% -40% is about it. It runs 40 ma or so at 250 volts.

Since it is damn hard to QSY this thing, running is the way to go, and the very first CQ "AWA" resulted in a very first QSO with NJ station. Wow, the thing actually works! After a few more QSO's, I started to get a bunch of calls, little did I know that Dan K2YWE had

spotted me and a short but exciting run developing. Who would have guessed? When the band "dried up" around 10:30 I got tired of the straight key - it had been 15 years since I used one of those, I ended up with 13 QSO's, and the best DX was Minnesota for 1034 miles @2.6 watts.

So, if you hear something sounding funny on the bands give them a call, hopefully their rig works well enough to keep the OO reports from rolling in. Answered a call a few years ago on 80M and it was a guy who made a transmitter out of parts from a broken CFL lamp and a 3.551 crystal. What a strange tone that rig had. I was getting pretty much 559's and a couple of 577's – what's a 577?



Careful where you touch - it's got me once already!

Matt KB3IKC Racking Up Points at K3AJ during WPX RTTY - Bob ND3D



"A Family Affair – The R. L. Drake Story" – from KB6NU Blog

A Family Affair

The R.L. Drake Story



By John Loughmiller, KB9AT

I was never owned a Drake, but I used to drool over their ads in QST as a Johnny Novice ham and they were ubiquitous in contesting for many years. Hue K7HUE posted a review of what looks like an interesting book by KB9AT about the history of the R.L. Drake company on KB6NU's blog here.

Central Virginia Chapter Meetings and Presentations - Geo N4UA





On 19 Feb 2020, the Central Virginia chapter held an extended session at the Lynchburg Red Cross building. The advertised topics were Morserunner/N1MM+ integration, code readers, particularly CW GET, and the use of local skimmers in contests.

Knight, NJ4Q, gave an excellent presentation on setting up and operating Morserunner from N1MM. In attendance were NN4RB, N8AID, W4WWQ, K4CUE, N4NQY, N3AC, KC4D, WD4KQI, K4YCR, N3CW, N4UA, K4XL, W4JAM and W4PK.

Rick NN4RB next showed the details of getting CW GET up and running. Finally, Mark N2QT showed pros and cons of setting up a local skimmer, including a short discussion of locating the line between Assisted and non-Assisted operation.

PVRC Contest Award Sponsorships – Dan K2YWE

One of the ways in which PVRC contributes to the well being of radiosport is by sponsoring major contest awards. Below is a list of the awards our club is sponsoring this season. They were the same last year:

ARRL Sweepstakes:

- SO LP Phone Atlantic Division
- SO HP CW Roanoke Division

ARRL International DX Contest:

- SO HP CW North America

ARRL June VHF Contest

- SO HP Atlantic Division
- SO HP Roanoke Division
- SO LP Atlantic Division
- SO LP Roanoke Division

CQ WW RTTY Contest - World Club

CQ WPX RTTY Contest -World Club

CQ WW DX Contest SSB - SOAB EUROPE High Power

CQ WW DX Contest SSB - SOAB USA High Power

CQ WW 160 CW - Single Operator Assisted USA Zone 5

You will see that the mix is:

CW-3, PH-3, RTTY-2 HP-7, LP-3 HF-8, VHF-4 SO-10, CLUB-2 USA/NA-9, WORLD-2, EU-1

The officers annually review the club's sponsorships and occasionally make adjustments, with trustee concurence, that they believe are in line with the best interests of the membership and the contest community as a whole. Some PVRC plaque sponsorships have become a tradition. Choices are limited when changes are considered, as first refusal is given to the previous year's sponsors. Award sponsorship expenses this year were in budget at \$840. We expect some moderate escalation next season.



Master.dta File Editor Tool - John K3TN

If you run your own skimmer, or just like to hack N1MM, I ran across VE3NEA freeware tool to edit the .dta file used in N1MM for the SuperCheckPartial – info here.

KC0W did suggest one use: as an alternative to a history file for small contests, like the PVRC reunion, to highlight members.

Membership News – Tim N3QE

PVRC did not add any new members in the latest reporting period.

Chapter leaders please remember to complete the <u>Meeting Attendance Report</u>. Members can check and update their roster details via the Roster Lookup.

Upcoming Contests – from WA7BNM

March 2020	
	0000Z, Mar 7 to 2400Z, Mar 8
Stew Perry Topband Challenge	1500Z, Mar 14 to 1500Z, Mar 15
North American Sprint, RTTY	0000Z-0400Z, Mar 15
■ BARTG HF RTTY Contest	0200Z, Mar 21 to 0200Z, Mar 23
Russian DX Contest	1200Z, Mar 21 to 1200Z, Mar 22
	0000Z, Mar 28 to 2359Z, Mar 29

Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Thanks to Bob K4NTO, Dan K2YWE, Bruce WK3A, Bob ND3D and Geo N4UA contributions to this issue of the PVRC newsletter.

Fresh new sunspots are showing up – maybe next spring 10m and 15m will be at least back in the menu, if only as appetizers or dessert if not yet the main course. Part of my spring cleaning has been donating some of my unused gear to PVRCers that are mentoring young contesters. If you have some worthy young hams in mind, or equipment to donate – let me know, I'll put a notice in the newsletter. Let's see how many CKs of 20 (besides the University club stations!) that we get to show up in Sweeps this year!

The quality and usefulness of the PVRC newsletter depends on contributions from members. If you have photos from club meetings, screen shots of new contest software, or brief writeups on station improvements or contest war stories, send them in any format to <u>ipescatore at aol dot com</u>

From the PVRC Treasurer - Dan K2YWE

PVRC has chosen not to implement an annual dues requirement. We depend on the generosity of all our club members to finance our annual budget. In addition, active PVRC members are expected to participate and submit logs for at least two PVRC Club Competition contests per year.

When contemplating your donation to PVRC, each member should consider the benefit you are receiving from PVRC and its many opportunities for your personal growth in our wonderful hobby, then donate accordingly.

Direct donations to PVRC via Credit Card or PayPal may be made by clicking this "Donate" button and clicking the next Donate button that appears on your screen:



Donations to PVRC are not tax deductible

Eyeball QSO Directions

The latest info on local club meetings and get togethers will always be sent out on the PVRC reflector and posted on the PVRC web site.





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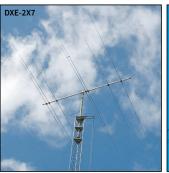


DX Engineering's Amateur Radio Blog for New and Experienced Hams.

Visit OnAllBands.com for information you can use to improve your on-air experience.



Make DX Engineering your go-to source for proven antenna towers. Choose from Rohn/American Towers, including Rohn G-Series guyed towers and Amerite 25 Series bracket towers; lightweight freestanding aluminum towers from Universal; and packaged tower kits from TBX, which come with rotor plate, top plate, hardware pack and top section steps. Enter "Tower" at DXEngineering.com to view your options.







Yagi Antennas

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Manual 160-10 m 2.5 kW

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OM4000A - OM4000HF OM2500A - OM2500HF

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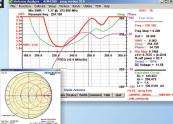


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IC-7610 | HF/50 MHz All Mode Transceiver

• Large 7-inch color display with high resolution real-time spectrum scope and waterfall . Independent direct sampling receivers capable of receiving two bands/two modes simultaneously



IC-7300 | HF/50MHz Transceiver

• RF Direct Sampling System • New "IP+" Function • Class Leading RMDR and Phase Noise Characteristics • 15 Discrete Band-Pass Filters • Built-In Automatic Antenna Tuner



IC-718 | HF Transceiver

• 160-10M** • 100W • 12V operation • Simple to use • CW Keyer Built-in • One touch band switching • Direct frequency input • VOX Built-in • Band stacking register • IF shift • 101 memories



IC-R8600 | Wideband Software Defined Receiver

 10 kHz to 3 GHz Super Wideband Coverage • P25, NXDN™, dPMR™, D-STAR Mode • Large Dot Matrix LCD Display w/ Quick Spectrum Scope • SD Card Slot • Remote Control Function



IC-7100 | All Mode Transceiver

• HF/50/144/430/440 MHz Multi-band, Multi-mode, IF DSP • D-STAR DV Mode (Digital Voice + Data) • Intuitive Touch Screen Interface • Built-in RTTY Functions



IC-2730A | VHF/UHF Dual Band Transceiver

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IC-2300H | VHF FM Transceiver

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• Analog FM/D-Star DV Mode • SD Card Slot for Voice & Data Storage • 50W Output on VHF/UHF Bands • Integrated GPS Receiver • AM Airband Dualwatch



ID-4100A | VHF/UHF Dual Band Digital Xcvr

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• Massive heatsink guarantees 80 watts of solid RF power • Loud 3 watts of audio output for noisy environments • Large 6 digit backlit LCD display for excellent visibility • 200 memory channels for serious users



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• Power Packed System Fusion Transceiver • High Audio Output Power • Rugged Powerful Transmitter • Integrated 66ch High Sensitivity GPS • 1200/9600 APRS Data Communications



FTM-400XD | 2M/440 Mobile

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 Receive performance on a whole other level from narrow bandwidth roofing filters that only full down conversion can provide • CW Morse code decode/encode possible with stand-alone unit • 150dB Blocking dynamic range (BDR) • Expanded touch operation scope • Kenwood Sky Command® II Support • Remote operation achieved without host PC Direct remote-control function (KNS)



TS-590SG | HF/50MHz Transceiver

• Equipped with 500 Hz/2.7 kHz roofing filter as standard • ALC derived from TS-990S eliminating spike issues • Antenna output function (shared with DRV connector) • CW - morse code decoder function • Improved 1st mixer • New PFB key with multi-function knob • New split function enabling quick setting • LED backlight with selectable color tone



TM-D710G | 2M/440 Dualband

• V+V/V+U/U+U operation • Built-in GPS • Built-in TNC for APRS & DX-Cluster operation • 50W 2M & UHF • 1,000 memories • Dual receive • Green or amber backlight colors • Latest APRS firmware w/new features • Sky Command II remote functions

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TM-V71A | 2M/440 DualBand

• High RF output (50W) • Multiple Scan • Dual receive on same band (VxV, UxU) • Echolink® memory (auto dialer) • Echolink® Sysop mode for node terminal ops • Invertible front panel • Choice of green/amber for LCD panel • 104 code digital code squelch • "Five in One" programmable memory • 1000 multifunction memory

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TM-281A | 2 Mtr Mobile

• 65 Watt • 200 Memories • CTCSS/DCS • Mil-Std specs • Hi-quality audio

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TS-480SAT/HX | HF + 6M Transceiver

• 480HX 200W HF & 100W 6M (no tuner) • 480SAT 100W HF & 6M w/AT • Remotable w/front panel/speaker • DSP built-in

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TH-D72A

2M/440 HT w/extended RX

• 5W TX, RX 118-524 MHz, VxU, VxV, UxU • APRS w/built-in 1200/9600 TNC • Built-in GPS, Built-in USB, digipeater • Echolink® compatible, • Mil-Spec STD810

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TH-D74A2M/220/440 HT w/D-STAR!

• D-STAR compatible • APRS ready w/built in GPS • Color weather station information • Built-in KISS mode TNC • High-performance DSP voice processing • Standard compatibility for Bluetooth

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The ZUMspot Kit Package Includes:

- ZUMspot RPi UHF board and antenna fully assembled and tested
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